



The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)

Modified School Review



BEDS Code	140600010039
School Name	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Multicultural Institute (PS 39)
School Address	487 High Street, Buffalo, NY, 14211
District Name	Buffalo City School District
School Leader	Ramona Reynolds
Dates of Review	October 8 and 9, 2013
School Accountability Status	Priority School
Type of Review	SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) Modified School Review

School Information Sheet												
Grade Configuration	Pre-K-8	Total Enrollment	643	SIG Recipient	X	Title 1 Population	94%	Attendance Rate	92.10%			
Free Lunch %	91.2 %	Reduced Lunch	2.8 %	Student Sustainability	94 %	Limited English Proficient	.7 %	Students with Disabilities	22.2 %			
Number of English Language Learner Classes												
#Transitional Bilingual	0		#Dual Language	0		#Self-Contained English as a Second Language	0					
Number of Special Education Classes												
#Special Classes	5		#Consultant Teaching			#Integrated Collaborative Teaching	9					
# Resource Room	0											
Number Special Classes												
#Visual Arts	1.2	#Music	1.2	#Drama	0		#Foreign Language	1	#Dance	0	#CTE	2
Racial/Ethnic Origin												
American Indian or Alaska Native	.6 %	Black or African American	92.3 %	Hispanic or Latino	3.4 %	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	.3%	White	1.3 %	Multi-racial	2.1%	
Personnel												
Years Principal Assigned to School	5		# of Assistant Principals	2		# of Deans	0		# of Counselors / Social Workers	.5 1		
Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate	0 %		Teaching Out of Certification	0 %		Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.	8%		Average Teacher Absences	11		
Credit Accumulation (High School Only) and Performance Rates												
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A		% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A		% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits	N/A		4 Year Graduation Rate	N/A		
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4	4%		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4	2%		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4	4 th . Grade-53% 8 th . Grade-28%		6 Year Graduation Rate	N/A		
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA												
	American Indian or Alaska Native				X		Black or African American					
	Hispanic or Latino						Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander					
	White						Multi-racial					
X	Students with Disabilities						Limited English Proficient					
X	Economically Disadvantaged						All Students					
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Math												
	American Indian or Alaska Native				X		Black or African American					
	Hispanic or Latino						Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander					
	White						Multi-racial					
	Students with Disabilities						Limited English Proficient					
	Economically Disadvantaged						All Students					
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science												
	American Indian or Alaska Native						Black or African American					
	Hispanic or Latino						Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander					
	White						Multi-racial					
X	Students with Disabilities						Limited English Proficient					
X	Economically Disadvantaged						All Students					
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective												
	Limited English Proficiency											

Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DCIP, etc.):

TOP PRIORITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SCHOOL:

1. Common Core Implementation/Alignment

- Full implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards during all lessons.

2. Effective Lesson Delivery

- Lesson preparation and delivery includes attributes of explicit instruction used recursively and extends to the teaching of English, math (although modified for Math Investigations), science, social studies, and most special area subjects.

3. Technology Integration

- Increased instructional technology use in the classrooms.
- Increased student use of the interactive white boards.

4. Data Driven Dialogue

- Vertical team analysis of student work occurs during vertical team meetings. Teachers utilize Research for Better Teaching's Data Driven Dialogue (DDD) strategies. These strategies include:
 - *Making predictions about what they think the data will reveal
 - *"Going visual" with the data by posting the data on large charts for all team members to see
 - *Citing factual, data-based observations
 - *Generating multiple possible explanations or implications for what the team has observed and surface questions for further investigation
 - *Verifying causes for problems in the student data
 - *Formulating an action plan to address the identified problem(s)
 - *Implementing and monitoring the action plan

5. Effective Writing Instruction

- Teachers utilize Step Up to Writing Tools and strategies to deliver grade-level appropriate developmental writing instruction (i.e. sentence, paragraph, essay, research paper)

Mark an "X" in the box below the appropriate designation for each SOP

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
2.5	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
3.2	The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
3.3	Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
5.4	All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

School Review Narrative:

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being, and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.

Areas for Improvement:

2.3 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.

- While the school leader has used resources to support several of her goals, she has not leveraged the resources available to her to improve student achievement. The school received an additional \$1.8 million in funding as part of a School Improvement Grant (SIG), but the additional funding did not result in gains in student achievement or significant long-term transformation of the school. The school leader did not directly plan for sustainability following the end of SIG funding. The school leader used SIG funds to reduce class sizes and hire coaches, teachers, and teaching assistants. However, now that the SIG funding has ended, class sizes have increased so that they now average more than 28 students in some grades. In addition, the school released all personnel hired from SIG funds, with the exception of an assistant principal and two coaches, one who serves as an Instructional Coach and one who is an Instructional Technology Coach. In the past, the District had been primarily responsible for fiscal decisions. For this current school year, the District implemented building-based budgeting and staffing. The school leader shared with the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT or "the review team") that she allocated programmatic resources to continue school-based initiatives, such as the "Step Up to Writing" program, and the CHAMPS behavioral management approach. However, given the poor student achievement results, which include two percent of students scoring levels 3 and 4 on the state mathematics exam and four percent scoring levels 3 and 4 on the English Language Arts (ELA) exam, the review team saw no evidence of how the prioritization of resources across the school was addressing student performance. For example, while the school leader funded an Instructional Technology Coach to promote her School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) goal to improve technology integration, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) found minimal use of technology in the classrooms visited. While the school leader has used resources to promote her goals, the IIT found that her prioritization was not done in a strategic manner that addresses the significant needs at the school. As a result, the school leader's ability to address fully the needs of both students and staff is limited, and does not lead to improved educational outcomes.

2.5 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice:** Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).

- Based on a review of the SCEP and other school documents as well as interviews with the school leader and other school staff, the IIT determined that few evidence-based systems and structures

to improve practices in critical areas exist. The school leader reported that Data-Driven Instruction (DDI) protocols are in place. However, the review team did not observe evidence of these protocols. Professional development (PD) had focused on District-required initiatives in the past; however this year, a year-long school-based PD calendar/topic list has been developed. According to the school leader, she instituted a cyclical instructional improvement process to identify differentiated instructional supports. This formal process involves monthly classroom visits with written feedback, conferences with teachers, weekly administrative team meetings, and weekly meetings with coaches. Grade bands (e.g., 1-3, 4-6) meet weekly. Vertical/horizontal meeting time is provided once per cycle so that special area and secondary (grades 7 and 8) teachers can attend. Staff reported to the IIT that only one vertical grade level meeting per month is focused on data analysis. A District-led DTSDE review in March 2013 had a finding that the school had a “lack of identified SMART goals, coupled with Tenet misalignment, which resulted in isolated activities that were implemented with insufficient measures of effectiveness.” The school leader indicated students with disabilities, which constitute more than 22 percent of the student population, have had minimal exposure to the Common Core curriculum. In addition, the IIT found little evidence that technology integration, effective writing instruction, and effective lesson delivery, three of the priorities identified by the school, were being successfully addressed in the classroom. The absence of evidence-based systems and structures to examine individual and school-wide practices limits the school leader’s ability to monitor the success of initiatives within the school, ultimately lessening the impact these efforts will have on improving student achievement.

Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

Areas for Improvement:

3.2 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.

- Based on interviews with the school leader and other school personnel, the IIT determined that the school has yet to make any significant progress in aligning curricula and assessments to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The school leader stated that “no staff member is trained to write curriculum aligned to the Common Core.” The District purchased and the school implemented a new reading series this year. Teachers interviewed by the IIT felt the district-level PD was ineffective. One teacher said that those in attendance were “talked at, not to.” According to the teachers that the IIT interviewed they received a quick overview of the reading program, with no application or follow-up afterward. The review team found that in the 14 classrooms they visited and the numerous lesson plans they reviewed there was a lack of rigor and coherence needed for the curriculum to appropriately support the CCLS. Specific modifications for subgroups were not explicit in plans reviewed. The 2013-14 SCEP indicates that there was insufficient

instructional differentiation as well as a “lack of differentiation and rigor in teachers’ lesson plans.” The review team saw evidence of this throughout the visit. As a result of the lack of full implementation of a rigorous and coherent curriculum appropriately aligned to CCLS, students are neither adequately exposed to demanding, rigorous curricula, nor prepared for new assessments; consequently, most students are not progressing appropriately toward being college and career ready.

3.3 The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice: Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.

- Documents reviewed indicated that the school leader collects and reviews lesson plans and provides feedback. However, the review team found that the majority of unit and lesson plans the team reviewed were not comprehensive, coherent, or rigorous enough to support effectively the CCLS. Use of data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols in constructing plans was not evident. As a result of the lack of development and implementation of comprehensive, coherent and rigorous units and lesson plans supportive of the CCLS and designed to meet individual student needs and goals, few students show growth in meeting the demands of CCLS across grade/subject areas.

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

Areas for Improvement:

4.3 The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice: Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.

- The students in the classrooms visited by the review team were compliant, but either passively engaged or not engaged in the lessons being taught. The school staff informed the review team that continuation of the “Step Up To Writing” program is a major school goal, yet no comprehensive, complex construction through writing was observed by the IIT in any of the 14 classrooms visited. A summer training program on writing occurred this past summer, yet the school leader stated “we are just starting to get a handle on writing.” While increased use of instructional technology was stated as a school-wide goal, only two classrooms visited by the IIT were using the interactive white boards with which all rooms are equipped. One teacher observed by the review team used the white board as a writing surface, and the other teacher used it in a slightly more interactive manner. Whole-group teacher-centered instruction was prevalent in the classrooms the review team visited. Multiple points of access for students, particularly members of identified subgroups, were not evident. The school and District acknowledges that the adopted mathematics series has gaps in alignment to CCLS. Teachers indicated to the IIT they have begun to use common planning times to review curricula modules on Engageny.org. Staff and the school leader acknowledge they are struggling with implementation of the mathematics modules stating

“they [the modules] are very different.” Instructional shifts required by CCLS, such as high levels of text complexity, text-based evidence in responses, peer-to-peer discussion and questioning, synthesis, analysis, application, and deep conceptual learning were non-existent in the classrooms visited. Higher-order thinking skills and differentiation were not evident. Individual student goals and academic learning targets were not evident in classrooms visited. Current instructional practices limit students’ access to a robust curriculum that supports the CCLS and results in students that are not engaged in their own learning. These factors limit increases in achievement.

Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

Areas for Improvement:

5.4 **The school has received a rating of *Developing* for this Statement of Practice:** The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.

- The school offers programs to address the social and emotional developmental health needs in the building. The CHAMPS program, begun with SIG funds, is one such example. According to the school leader, the staff has modified the district-sponsored Positive Behavioral Instructional Supports (PBIS) to be more school-specific. In addition, the school has contracted the services of a “Say Yes” site facilitator. These programs have contributed toward increasing student attendance rates (currently 92.1 percent), as well as decreasing short-term and long-term suspension rates. A Parent Coordinator has been hired. While the building was quiet during the two-day visit, one teacher stated he was aware of bullying. When students were asked by the IIT if they had been, had seen, or knew anyone who was bullied in school in the last month, all 13 students raised their hands. All 13 students commented to the IIT that they had witnessed fights in the building in the last month. During interviews with the IIT, staff did not specifically mention how data is used to meet the social and emotional developmental health needs of students. The school has programs and structures in place to address student social and emotional developmental health needs. However, not all constituents can articulate their role or the use of data in promoting student social and emotional developmental health. As not all student social and emotional developmental health needs are being met, there is a negative impact on student achievement.

Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement: The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.

Areas for Improvement:

6.5 **The school has received a rating of *Ineffective* for this Statement of Practice:** The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for

appropriate support services for their children.

- Vigorous, comprehensive programs to share data and encourage dialogue with parents, students, and school community members have not yet been implemented. Traditional communication mechanisms involving progress reports, reports cards, parent-teacher meetings, Open House, and newsletters occur. Informational workshops to be conducted during monthly parent meetings have not started yet. Parents did not mention to the review team using the Buffalo Public Schools Parent Portal. Parents indicated to the IIT that a full-time Parent Coordinator communicates information to parents when parents call the school. Although there are future plans to involve the community in informational workshops, at the time of the review, the school community was not empowered to take action to support student learning, leading to higher student achievement.